

Pitzer Ranch, Pitzer-Peairs House  
(Pitzer Psychological Services)  
Bounded by Base Line Road,  
Padua and Towne Avenues  
4353 Towne Avenue  
City of Claremont  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS NO. CA-2267-A

HABS  
CAL.  
19-CLAMOD,  
1-4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

HABS  
CAL,  
19-CLAMO,  
1-A-

STATE California	COUNTY Los Angeles	TOWN OR VICINITY City of Claremont
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Pitzer Ranch, Pitzer-Peairs House (Literature)		HABS NO. CA-2267-A
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Pitzer Psychological Services		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 4353 North Towne Avenue, City of Claremont, Los Angeles County, California, 91711		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1912 (Original plans and statement of original owner)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Robert H. Orr (signed floor plans)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE)  Refer to Supplemental Page		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Mission-Revival		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Uncut native fieldstone, clay tile, mortar, cement, wood.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Refer to floor plans.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE  Refer to Supplemental Page		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)  Refer to Pitzer-Peairs House Floor Plans		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES  Refer to Supplemental Page		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Walls, foundation, and roof: Good; Psychological services clinic.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE The Pitzer Ranch Complex HABS recordation was a mitigation measure for the Base Line Road/Towne Avenue Environmental Assessment to allow for the widening and improvement of Towne Avenue.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)  Refer to Narrative Report		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Dana C. Privitt, Sanchez Talarico Associates, Inc.		DATE April 1988

PITZER RANCH, PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE

SIGNIFICANCE

The Pitzer-Peairs House is part of the Pitzer Ranch Complex consisting of the Foreman's Residence, water tower, shed, stone barn, concrete reservoir, pump-house, and secondary house on Padua Avenue and the Pitzer-Peairs garage and stone wall on Towne Avenue.

The Pitzer-Peairs House is both architecturally and historically significant. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 4, 1986. The house was recognized at the time of construction as unique in design due to the use of fieldstone, its informal arrangement, and conformance to its surrounding rustic setting. The floor plan of the Pitzer-Peairs House is reflective of the philosophy behind bungalow architecture. Circulation between rooms is clear of obstruction. Each room leads to the next room through doorways or extended halls. Overall design reveals an arrangement of the interior doors making the entire house accessible without entering the originally open courtyard.

The structure is significant part of the bungalow tradition, unique because of its superior stone facades, and according to Robert Winter, architectural historian "... the finest stone house in Southern California."

The Pitzer-Peairs House is one of the finest examples of bungalow architecture. At the turn of the century, bungalows were attractive for several reasons. Bungalows were affordable housing priced between \$500 to \$5,000 to construct, they were simple, and they were artistic dwellings. Relatively inexpensive property in the warm climate of Southern California permitted builders to economize on materials and construction so that the bungalow's appeal reached many. "... the bungalow contributed to the privacy considered sacred to the middle class." In its economy, practicality, and efficiency, the California bungalow grew to encompass individualist traits. According to Gustav Stickley, father of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, "More significantly, the bungalow reflected specific Southern California qualities that have, over time, developed into recognizable traits of the region."

The Pitzer-Peairs House is a fine example of the Bungalow style. It is also a fine example of the fieldstone structures built along the "Foothill Belt" in the Los Angeles area. The house has influenced architecture in the area. The Pflueger house on Foothill Boulevard in the City of Glendora was constructed in 1937 utilizing the same general contractor and stone mason.

The Pitzer-Peairs House is associated with the agricultural heritage of the City of Claremont and Southern California. The house was constructed during the period of early settlement and exploration of the citrus-producing land on Base Line Road and changing use of natural resources in the region.

The Pitzer-Peairs House has strong ties to families important to the settlement of Claremont. The house has had only three owners: Lee C. and Blanche Becket Pitzer, Maurice and Adele Peairs, and John and Patricia Hodges (current owners).

#### EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE

The Pitzer-Peairs House is a one-story hacienda-type California Bungalow. The house reflects both the California Bungalow and Mission Revival styles of architecture. The 4,000 square foot square-shaped bungalow is built around an enclosed central courtyard (Exhibits 12 and 13). The house is situated on 1.6 acres, 100 feet back from Towne Avenue. The front yard is enclosed on the north and east by a fieldstone wall. Two curved sweeping walks extend from the corners of the house to the respective corners of the lot. There is California Craftsman detailing in the three foot eave overhangs, exposed rafter ends, and horizontal configuration. The Mission Revival style is seen in the arches, tile roof, and courtyard. The low pitch hipped roof is constructed of Spanish tile.

The Pitzer-Peairs House is wood frame with a veneer of skillfully fitted fieldstone. Stone buildings are constructed of two methods. One is to construct the stone bearing wall and then build a frame on the inside. Most stone structures in Claremont were built using this method. The second method is to build a wooden frame and then apply the exterior stone work as a veneer. The Pitzer-Peairs House utilizes this second method. The frame of the house was built onsite, predating the available balloon frame technique. Two-by-fours and diagonal one-by-fourteens were covered with lath and plaster. This provided six inches of insulation. The stone facade was laid over the plaster. Plaster is evident on the eave overhangs.

The architect, Robert H. Orr and the original owner, Lee C. Pitzer, chose fieldstone to utilize local materials and to blend with the rustic environment. Claremont has an abundance of stone from the surrounding hills and mountains due to the City's location on an alluvial fan. Builders in early Claremont used fieldstone in the construction of housing and for decorative features. It was a convenient building material as fields had to be cleared of stone for cultivation. Most of the all stone structures are located in north Claremont.

The fieldstone structure was designed so that large boulders were at the bottom with gradually smaller stones at the top. The larger stones at the bottom make the bottom sides of the house battered or flared. Some of the boulders are almost three feet in diameter. The selection of fieldstone was made by Mr. Roseburg, stone mason for the Pitzer-Peairs House. Mr. Roseburg paid particular attention to the configuration and design of each stone to provide a continuity of visual texture.

#### Front/East Elevation

Two prominent arches are supported by large fieldstone, elephantine columns (Exhibits 14 and 15). Behind the arches is a large front porch which extends in a pergola to the south elevation. Entrance to the house from the porch is through two sets of French doors. The doors are quart-sawn oak with beveled glass set in multi-light doors. Two square casement windows are located in the original front (now an office) north of the porch.

Hammock rings are in the fieldstone walls of the front porch. Hammocks were attached to these rings.

#### North Elevation

The north elevation of the Pitzer-Peairs House is the least architecturally significant. The north elevation is located adjacent to Base Line Road (Exhibit 16).

There are nine windows along the northern elevation. The pattern of these windows is in the Prairie style. The kitchen is located in the central third of the north elevation. The prominent feature is a series of large and small casement windows. Views of the front yard are visible through these windows. A row of three windows is located in the dining room.

One of three chimneys in the house is found in the center of the northern elevation. This chimney serves the cellar furnace.

#### Dining Room

All of the woodwork in the dining room is Circasian walnut. The walls are paneled in walnut below a plate rail. A built-in buffet is of Circasian walnut. The top and front veneer in the buffet is applied in double-book style. The floor of the dining room is clay tile. The ceiling of the dining room is coffered with walnut beams.

#### South Elevation

Four casement windows are located on the south elevation. These windows have fieldstone sashes and concrete sills.

The living room is the entrance to the house.

A massive chimney for the living room boulder fireplace is located near the east end of the south elevation under the pergola. Surrounding the chimney is two stained glass windows depicting Dutch children.

### Living Room

The living room is a large oak-panelled room with vaulted oak-beamed ceiling typical of the Craftsman Bungalow. The south end of the living room is dominated by a large quartzite stone fireplace. The stones for the fireplace came from the nearby mouth of the San Antonio Canyon. The marble fireplace mantle was purchased from a local tombstone cutter. The flanking stained glass windows are located on either side of the fireplace. The left window is of a Dutch girl and the right window is of a Dutch boy. Speculation is that the windows were supplied by the Judson Studios of Los Angeles. Any significance to the Dutch theme is unknown.

Double doors in the north end of the living room lead to the dining room. These beveled-glass doors are oak on the living room side and walnut veneer on the dining room side in order to match the dining room woodwork. A bookcase on the north wall of the living room was originally a door to a coat closet. This modification dates to circa 1950 to permit installation of a modern shower in the small bathroom.

The living room as well as the rest of the house was furnished with Craftsman furniture. Oak or maple floors were the predominate flooring material. The dining room had clay tile flooring.

### West Elevation

The west elevation was designed with many windows in order to capture the rays of the sun. At the back entrance to the Pitzer-Peairs House is a multi-paned window with one large glass pane and two smaller multi-paned side-light windows. Two vertical double-hung windows are located in the northwest bedroom. One large and one small casement window are located in the west bedroom.

Four large casement windows are located on the west side of the sleeping porch of the southwest bedroom. These casement windows descend vertically into pockets between the interior and exterior walls leaving the openings free of obstruction when fully opened. Two casement windows on the south wall of the sleeping porch are of similar design.

The Pitzer-Peairs cellar is most visible from the west side of the house. Two square casement screen entries to the crawl space under the house, a cellar entrance, and large and small casement windows for the cellar can be seen. There is a small chimney once used for a stove or water heater in the laundry area of the cellar. An arched entrance with five stairs to the back first floor screen porch is on the northwest side of the house.

#### Patio Court

The Pitzer-Peairs House is built around an open patio or court in the center of the house. Six rooms: five bedrooms and living room faced out to the enclosed patio. The original plan called the area a "Court." In published illustrations, Mr. Orr changed the designation to "Patio." Originally, the court was open to the sky. Orr built a peak wooden framework/trellis-cover for the patio. Long stretches of canvas could be rolled across the framework in the heat of summer or pulled back against the interior house frame to permit sun exposure on winter days. At the center of the court was a plumbed stone fountain primarily for planting ferns and succulents. The floor was brick on sand. Hammocks could be tied on to one of the several sets of hammock rings in the patio.

Hammock rings are diagonally position in the stonework of the interior walls of the patio. French doors with bevelled glass. The trellis was later glazed with sheets of glass continuing to permit natural light to enter.

#### MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES

The courtyard was originally open. The courtyard was enclosed with a glass ceiling in circa 1915. Glazing the roof of the courtyard permitted a number of changes to be made to the Pitzer-Peairs House. The ability to reach all rooms without crossing the courtyard was no longer necessary. Many of the doors and windows leading from bedrooms to the patio were modified. Some were completely closed in order to accommodate closets in the rooms.

The brick over sand floor in the courtyard has been replaced with a concrete floor. The concrete floor has been scored and grouted to resemble the clay tiles found in the dining room floor. Date of modification is unknown.

The original fountain in the courtyard was removed. The former location of the fountain has been replaced with painted Mexican floor tiles. Date of modification is unknown.

The original court lamp fixtures were replaced with modern "bullet" lamps. The original lamps were stored on the property by the Peairs family. Date of modification is circa 1950s. The current owners, John and Patricia Hodges have restored and installed the original fixtures. These fixtures are hammered brass.

Fieldstone and woodwork in the courtyard has been painted. Date of modification is unknown. Paint on the quarter-sawn oak doors has been removed by John and Patricia Hodges. Paint of the fieldstones will not come off without incurring physical damage.

The bookcase on the north wall of the living room was originally a door to the coat closet. This modification dates to circa 1950 and was done to permit installation of a modern shower in the small bathroom.

Force hot water radiators and gravity powered circulating hot water system dating to 1912 have been replaced by current owners, John and Patricia Hodges.

All of the existing bathrooms and the kitchen have been modernized. These modifications have occurred over the years by the three property owners.

#### ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES

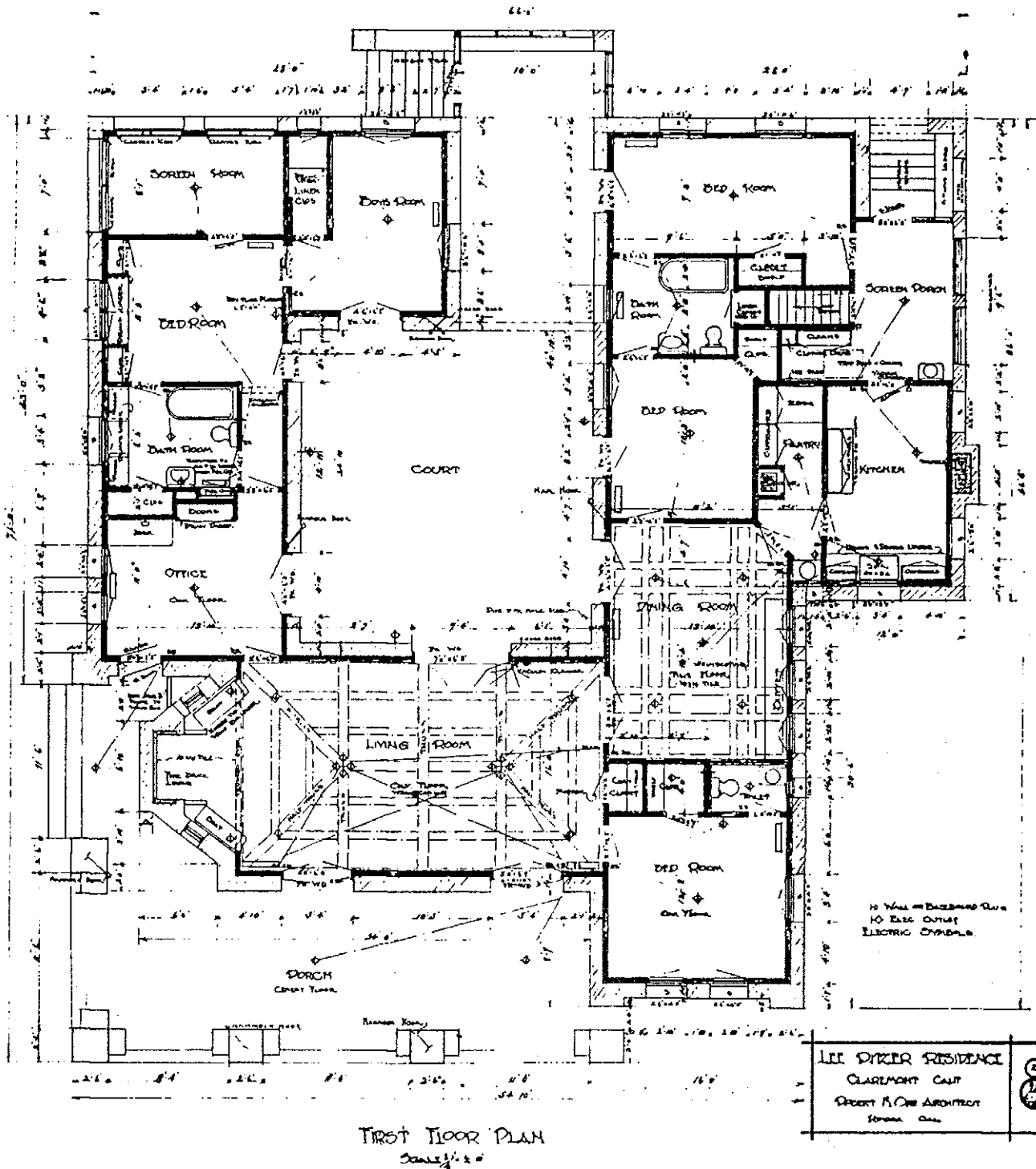
There are three other primary buildings on the property. These three structures are a shed, garage, and house. None of these buildings have historical significance.

The shed was constructed by the Peairs family in the early 1950s. The shed was originally two separate sheds: one structure for chickens and one structure for game hens. In the late 1950s, the two sheds were combined. The floor was paved for use as a tool shed and dog run. The shed is in poor condition.

A small house was moved onto the Pitzer property in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Its original location, date of construction, and builder/designer are not known. The house is a vernacular two-story, front-gabled residential structure with a one-story lean-to addition. The exterior is sheathed in light green asphalt single siding over a wood frame or possibly horizontal board siding. The roof material is composition sheeting. The house was originally one story. Later, the roof was raised to make it a two-story house. The house was used by grove workers. Graduate students from the Claremont Colleges have also lived in the house. The house has not been occupied for several years.

The garage is a one-story fieldstone structure. The architectural style and significance of the structure is discussed on the Architectural Data Form for the garage: HABS No. CA-2267-B.

The original fieldstone barn for the property is located north of the Pitzer-Peairs House on the east side of Towne Avenue. The barn has been converted into a residence.



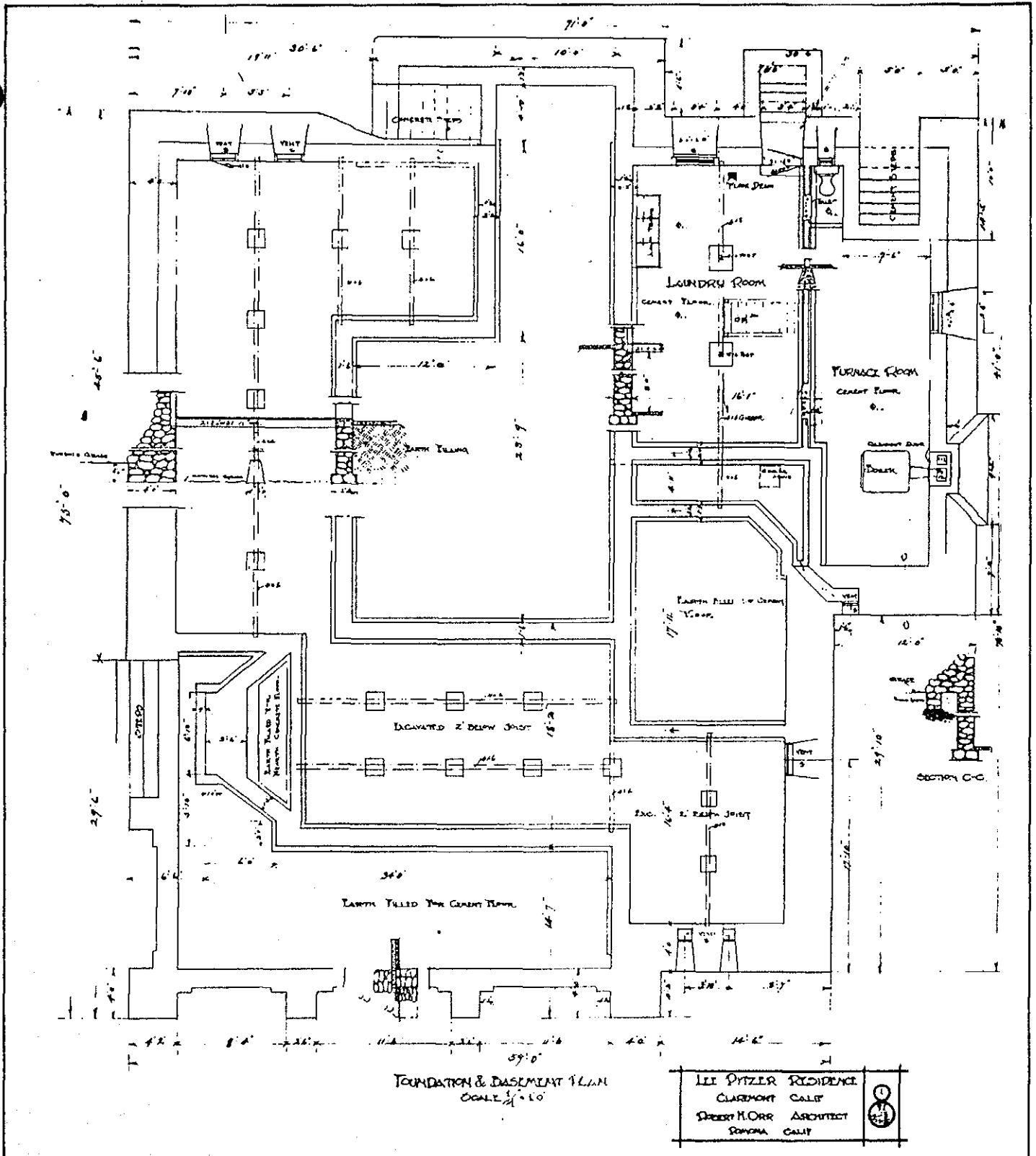
Source: Robert H. Orr

**PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE**  
**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
PITZER RANCH COMPLEX  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
City of Claremont

sanchez talarico  
associates



Exhibit 12



Source: Robert H. Orr

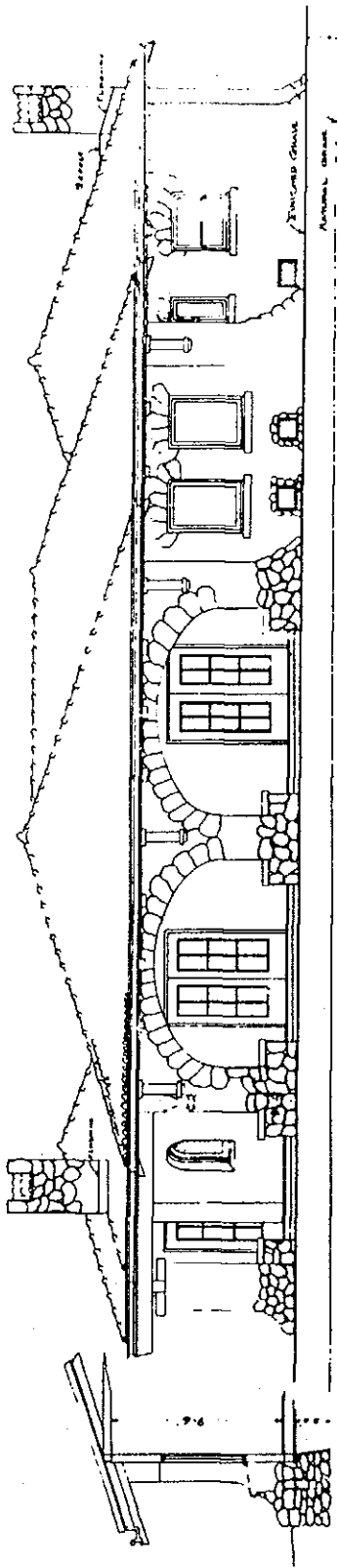
# **PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE FOUNDATION AND BASEMENT PLAN**

PITZER RANCH COMPLEX  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
City of Claremont

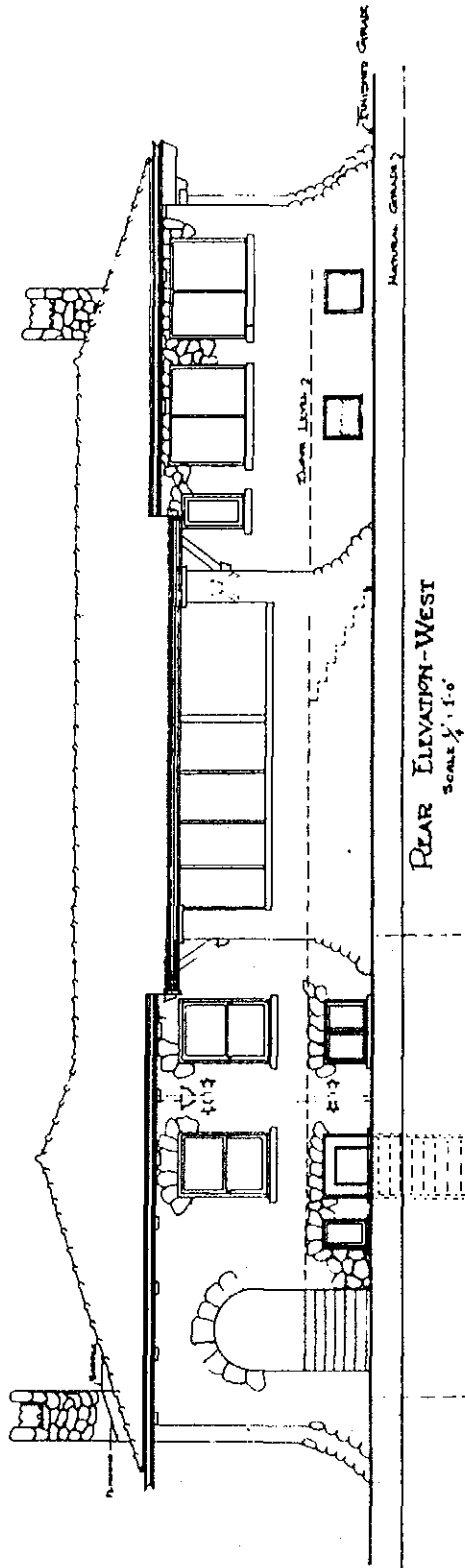
sanchez talarico  
associates



Exhibit 13



FRONT ELEVATION  
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



REAR ELEVATION-WEST  
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

LEE PITZER RESIDENCE  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.  
REBERT H. ORR, ARCHITECT  
PASADENA, CALIF.

Source: Robert H. Orr

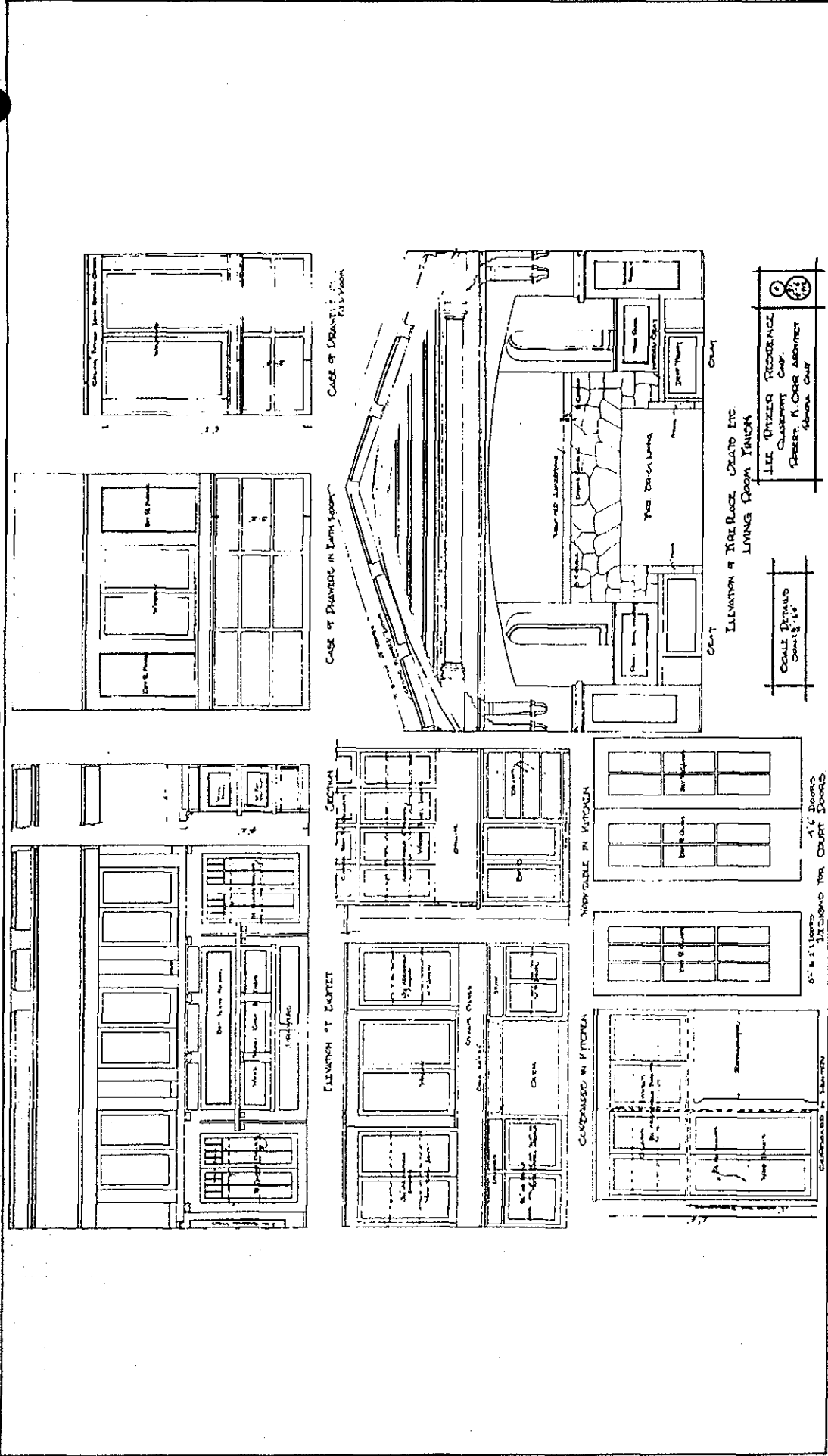
sanchez talarico  
associates



Exhibit 14

# PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE EAST AND WEST ELEVATIONS

PITZER RANCH COMPLEX  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
City of Claremont



Source: Robert H. Orr

sanchez talarico  
associates



Exhibit 15

# PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

PITZER RANCH COMPLEX  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
City of Claremont

Source: Robert H. Orr

sanchez talarico  
associates



Exhibit 16

# PITZER-PEAIRS HOUSE SOUTH AND NORTH ELEVATIONS

PITZER RANCH COMPLEX  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
City of Claremont

LEE PITZER RESIDENCE  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.  
ROBERT MORRIS, ARCHITECT  
PASADENA, CALIF.

SIDE ELEVATION - SOUTH

SIDE ELEVATION - NORTH

